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AN

ANSWER

TO THE

LETTER

FROM

Amsterdam,

Of *April* the 18. 1678.

Being found at *Harwich*, open'd, and carried to the Magistrates of that Place.

——— *Redit labor actus in Orbem.*

Printed *Anno Dom.* 1678.

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LETTER from *Amſterdam*,

Of *April* the 18. 1678.

Dear Fellow-Labourer,

YOurs of the 18th, of *April* came to a thouſand hands, before it reach'd mine. You do ill to commit matters of ſuch Importance to any thing, but to *Cypher*, knowing how much we have always ow'd to *Diſguiſes*: For which reaſon our Apoſtles preach not, but in a *Cloak*, and, for greater ſecurity, under two *Caps*, and chooſe their Texts out of the *myſterious* Book of the Revelations: They underſtand well enough that the precious Seed, which they ſow, will not grow, unleſs it be well *covered*, and that the Children of *Light* are none of the wiſeſt Generation. It grieved my heart, and almoſt turn'd my ſtomach, to ſee the *Old* Cauſe look like an *Old* Courtiſane newly riſen, undreſs'd, unpainted, and unperfum'd. What a vaſt difference there is between the Cauſe *dreſs'd*, and *undreſs'd*? I beſeech

 thee,

thee, who could endure to look on the *Hag* in her *nakedneſs*, her deſign of ſubverting Church and State, dethroning Kings, turning out Biſhops, and deſtroying men for daring to be *honeſt* and *rich*, in fine, in her *Native* cheating, lying, and forſwearing, with a thouſand other Helliſh qualities? But when ſhe hath *put on* her tender Conſcience, her fears of Popery and Arbitrary Government, her good will towards the King, and her charitable endeavours to reform his Miniſters: In good faith! ſhe is not the ſame thing. Wherefore, my dear Brother, let us behave our ſelves like good *Jockies*, and not diſcover the faults of our Beaſt, till ſhe is ſold. This, I aſſure thee, was the Art of our noble and ſucceſsful Predeceſſors, whoſe Deſigns the *Well-meaning* men (as they call'd them) never perceived, till paſt their power to prevent.

However, as the Devil will have it, the *Publication* of thy Letter has not done us much harm: For, People are now ſo well and ſolidly deceived, that it is no ſuch eaſie task to cure 'em. We talk'd to 'em formerly ſo much of the Goſpel, that 'tis now *Natural* for 'em to take every thing, we ſpeak, for ſuch. 'Tis true, it coſt us many a painful grimaſs, many a ſcrued eye, much wringing of the hands, and many an heart-rending groan, before they came to the Lure; but when we had once blinded 'em, we 'ene did what we pleaſed with 'em: We made ſport with 'em as the *Philiſtines* did with *Sampſon*, and may continue to do

do ſo, provided we remember to keep their hair cropt, *that is*, inſtruct 'em well in the *Presbyterian* Catechiſm. I muſt confeſs, it is wonderful to ſee, with what eaſe they ſwallow any thing from us; in ſo much as it is hard to tell, whether their throats are wider in taking in our *Impoſtures*, than ours would be in devouring them, whenever they fall within our clutches. We told them, that *War* with *France* was ſo neceſſary for us, that we ought to begin it before the leaſt preparation was made towards it: and they believ'd us. Preſently we tell 'em, that twenty *trifles* are far more neceſſary to be provided for, than the *War*: and they call it the Senſe of the Nation. We told the King, that we could not adviſe him either to War or Peace, unleſs we knew every individual part and circumſtance of his late Meſſage into *France*, *&c.* and yet we took upon us a little before to adviſe him to a Declaration of War, when we underſtood nothing of thoſe matters: and our ſhifting paſſes undiſcover'd. We ſay, that it is our Intereſt to joyn with any of the Confederates, that ſhall yet dare to ſtand out againſt the *French* King; and yet at the ſame time, and during the inſtant Treaty, we think fit to disband our Army, that no Confederate may be encouraged to do ſo. On the one ſide we profeſs, that there is no ſafety for us, unleſs we reduce the *French* Affairs to their condition at the *Pyrenean* Treaty; and on the other we take care in this conjuncture, to give his *Moſt Chriſtian Majeſty* the beſt opportunity

we

we are able, of making good terms. And when the noiſe of our coming into the Confederacy, had made him quit *Sicily*, and offer Propoſals for Peace, we reſolved to eaſe his mind of thoſe fears, and leave him to prey on *Europe* in quiet: and after all we gravely call the Courtiers *Penſioners of France*, and make the People believe, that the King himſelf is ſelling *Three Kingdoms* for a *French Marquiſate*. When we have a mind to accuſe any Great Miniſter, 'tis enough for us to cry *ſtop Thief* once, and all the Hounds open immediately: and becauſe we alledge nothing againſt him, they conclude his crimes *unſpeakable*. I vow to thee, it tickles me, to behold how eaſily we gull 'em. They are raviſhed with our Votes as ſoon as ever they hear 'em: Nay they are ready to ſwear they are good, before they know what they are. The firſt ſentence is, *What has the Houſe of Commons done to day?* The ſecond, *And very well done too.* So that I verily believe, ſhould they hear of a Vote paſſed for a Navy to cruiſe on *Salisbury* Plains, or that the Houſe of Commons be entruſted with the *Militia*, they would inſtantly proteſt, that it were the moſt reaſonable thing in the World. I am of opinion, that they imagine the *Commons* bound by their places to ſave the reſt of the Nation the labour of Thinking, and that it were ridiculous not to truſt thoſe with their *Reaſon*, whom they have truſted with (what they account more precious) their *Purſe*.

The

The *King's* late Speech, and the *Chancellor's* gave us ſome rub: They had ſo much plain and undeniable Reaſon in them, that ſeveral of our *Well-meaning* Party began to fail us. But a little patience will bring all about again. We muſt ſeem to yield at firſt, then protract matters, ſpend whole days in ſober debate whether *forthwith*, *immediately*, or *out of hand* be moſt proper, as if our *Parliament* intended to vie with the *French Academy* in refining Language, and then when matters are indifferently well perplex'd, and the [illegible] pretty thick, ſecretly clap on a weight, and bring in an *appropriating clauſe*, which, like the ſubſtracting mark in *Algebra*, takes off the force of thoſe Figures it is annexed to: and the day is our own once more. I never yet knew any Act ſo ſtout, as that it was not, like the Dragon in the *Apocrypha*, in danger of being ſplit by theſe hairs. Tacking of words one to another, is not more neceſſary for the *confounding of ſenſe* to our Teachers, than Tacking of Bills for the *confounding of buſineſs* to our Stateſmen. However I muſt acknowledge to thee, that I like not this ſtile of Rhetorick, which they have now li't on at Court. Such reſolution and briskneſs, if purſued, will utterly ruine us. A ſoft, meek, condeſcending Speech for my money: Oh! this is Oyl to the Fire. When we hear ſuch an one, we begin to think *them* guilty enough, and *our ſelves* their Maſters. In like manner we want mightily the old way of *taking off*, which certainly, while

while it held, was one of the greateſt *Revenues* of our Cauſe.

It is a great pity that our *Stratagem* of removing Miniſters took not. 'Twas an excellent good one, and had done our work effectually. By this means, we ſhould have ſtript the King of his Friends: For, who, doſt think, would have ventur'd the being a Counſellor, unleſs he could Propheſie what advice would be grateful to us, and would be ſure to give none elſe: and that would not ſerve his turn neither, for, we *would be ſure* to diſapprove it at a venture: beſides, it is our priviledge (and we have Precedents for it) to accuſe him, without being bound to ſhew any cauſe, which, how Paradoxical ſoever it may ſeem, is both juſt and honeſt; For, *Vox Populi*, *Vox Dei*: and, thou knowſt whoſe Repreſentatives we are. Moreover, had this Plot taken, the King had not only *loſt*, but we had *got* Friends. We have daily experience in what ſtead we are ſerved by *outed* Stateſmen. The *Turks* and we are much of a nature, and *Renegadoes* commonly prove the beſt *Captains* to us both.

We muſt endeavour to leſſen the Houſe of Lords, as much as we can; (*Nobility* and *Treachery* ſeldom fadging well together) and in order thereunto we begin to act, as if there were no ſuch thing in the World. We pronounce, that all *Treaties*, and other *State-Tranſactions*, ought to be conformable to our *Addreſſes*; and though the Lords *better Education*, *frequent Travelling abroad*,

abroad, &c. do generally fit them more for considerations of this kind, yet men ought to believe (as we do our ſelves) that each of us comes from the Plough like another *Serranus*, and being once the Creature of a dozen *Shoo-makers*, or ſuch-like Fellows, (and theſe drunk too) is ſufficiently *gifted* for the Government of a Nation. And the beſt is, that as amongſt the Biſhops we have ſome who favour *Presbytery*, which is, *No Biſhops*, ſo among the Lords we have ſome *Birthright-ſellers* who carry on our *Democracy*, which is, *No Lords*.

But, at preſent, our great and *true* grievance is the New-raiſed Army. We'l *ſit* hard, but it ſhall not *ſtand* long. We are reſolved, like green Peaſe, (the ſeaſon affords me the ſimilitude) to eat 'em young, though it coſt us never ſo dear: they may grow too hard for our teeth. And therefore (to carry on the Metaphor) we *butter 'em*, and *pepper 'em*. We ſooth 'em with fair words, and joyn iſſue with the King in calling 'em brave men, and ſuch as ſpent their *livelihoods*, that they might venture their *lives* for their Country. And at the ſame time we are about to appoint Committees for the receiving complaints, and hearing the lamentable cries of ſeveral *Pigs* and *Geeſe* againſt them, and have ordered ſtories to be brought in of more *important Outrages*. Somewhat in imitation of the *Scotch* ſtratagem; but, the truth is, the *Scots* have the advantage of us in this point, not only becauſe they are the more *demure*, and conſequently the *better*, lyars, (and men hardly ſuſpect ſo much *wit*,

as a *lie* comes to, in that *tone*) but alſo becauſe the Scene of their *Drama* is more remote, and their ſtories not ſo eaſily *diſproved* as ours. In all caſes we firmly purpoſe one way or other to get rid of this *inſtant* Monſter. For, elſe, what would thoſe tumults, thou ſpeak'ſt of, ſignifie? We'l disband 'em, if it be but to find 'em again, when we our ſelves need 'em. We'l ſerve 'em as a Printer doth his Letters, diſtribute 'em after the printing one ſheet into their reſpective Boxes, that, when occaſion is, they may be ſet in a *new form* to print another.

Thou need'ſt not bid us to ſet the pattern of 41 before our eyes: but I ſhould be glad thou couldſt tell us a way of removing it from thoſe of others: It doth us no ſmall miſchief. Would to Jove, the Act of *Oblivion* had been more efficacious, and correſponded better to the ends, for which we deſir'd it; which were only, thou know'ſt, that their Party might not remember *to prevent*, nor ours, *to forbear*. But we are never content: What an ungrateful Rogue am I to grumble ſo much, when I ought rather to thank the Devil, that (for the generality) thoſe *impreſſions* are at this time ſo well worn out, that men begin to hear with patience, what they would have abhorr'd five or ſix years ago, and *now* prick up their ears, where *then* their hair would have ſtood an end?

Before I go any farther, I think fit to advertiſe thee of one thing, which is, that thou muſt not think, for any thing thou read'ſt here, that the Nation,

Nation, or Houſe of Commons are all of our Party. No; we have a very ſmall one in either. But 'tis no news to thee, that the *Phariſees* are of the quality of Leaven: a little ſerves to influence the lump. Our buſineſs in the Houſe is, by ſpecious pretences and covert lyes, (the *Tools* of our Trade) to *work* a League offenſive and defenſive with ſeveral honeſt Gentlemen, who *mean* better than they *underſtand*, and by this courſe, when *Noſes* are told, (thanks to *thoſe* which we lead) for the moſt part we exceed by *one* or *two*: and ſuch a Vote is as much the *Common Juſtice and Prudence*, as if it had been made *Nemine contradicente*. I aſſure thee, this is a great *Prerogative* of the Houſe, and vaſt *Priviledge* for the Members; For, by this means many times a Noddle that hath never a dram of ſenſe in it, comes in a trice to be the *ſenſe of the Nation*.

Prithee, as ſoon as thou canſt, ſend me over ſome *Hand-Granadoes*, I mean, ſome pretty quaint *ſtories* to throw among the People. Popery is as good a Topick, as ever; it holds out admirably well. This morning a man brought me a dozen of Stories to ſell; and at leaſt nine or ten of 'em were on that ſubject. But I refus'd 'em all for improbable, ſave only one, which was of 50 Prieſts hid in a Cave in *Wales*, which he offered to prove out of the *Old Teſtament*, ſaying that *Abdias*'s hiding the Prophets was not *Hiſtory*, but *Propheſie*. There was another, of a ſecret League between *England* and *France*, ſeal'd and

deliver'd by the two Kings in the presence of certain *Brandenburghers*, which was pretty passable, and I may chance to buy.

But now to the main: Bid the *French Agent* endeavour to have our *Subsidies* better complied with. What? does he think the 50 thousand Pistols return'd hither the other day such a business? Mind him of our *natural Antipathy* against his Nation, and that it requires a great deal to take *this* off, and make us fit for Bribery *on the square*. But let him not despond: Money will do the work: 'tis that (as a modern Author, though an Enemy, truly says) which *makes all doctrines plain and clear*. This will force us to mistake the *French* King for the *Spaniſh*: and with good reason too, when his Gold speaks him so great a Master of the *Indies*. We'l make the *whole* Nation serve him: that is, we'l do his business, and receive his Money, and the Courtiers shall bear the blame. But, in good truth and sober sadness, we must watch the *Monsieur's* waters, and assist no farther to the *breaking* of the *Confederacy*, than it conduceth to the *piecing up* of the *Covenant*. We may else bring our Hogs to a fair Market: that is, 'ene be *sold* for Slaves. Did you ever hear of such a wheedling Letter, as he sent lately to our Brethren the *States*? He looks like the *Hostler* with his Hat in his hand, and a little Oats in't, and his *Bridle* under his arm: If he catch the *Beast*, he'l try if he can fit it better than the *Spaniard*; and, I'le warrant, he'l be sure to *girt* its

fat belly ſtreight enough; and never be at the expence of *ſhoving*.

It grieves me, that we have loſt ſo prime a Pen, as thou mention'ſt; but my comfort is, that our Authors ſeldom write well of the right ſide. Beſides, we have ſuch ſtore of Wits amongſt us, that we hardly miſs him: For, thanks be to Jove, the Saints now are not only famous for profound hum-drum Non-ſenſe, but we have as *ſhrewd raillerie*, and *tart drolling*, as any is among the *prophane*; ſo that now under the Sheep's skin you have not only the *Wolf*, but the *Monkey* alſo: and if thou conſider'ſt the intollerable Fornication amongſt us, thou'lt ſay, we've hook'd in the *Goat* to be of our Party too. We are infinitely improved ſince our firſt inſtitution. Our way is broader than it was, and more comprehenſive: We take in all Sects but *Epiſcopacy*, and have greater ſtore of *Deiſts* and *Atheiſts*, than the Conformiſts. Perhaps thou ſmileſt, when I tell thee of *Atheiſts*, but I aſſure thee (which is, doubtleſs, a *miracle* in confirmation of our doctrine) there are no greater ſticklers for Religion than *our Atheiſts*; which makes me not queſtion, but they're of the *Elect*: but the Atheiſts of the *other ſide* are in a ſad condition.

There's no fear of *Andrew*'s deſertion: He's of a right ſtock. *Hull* has an exact Repreſentative in him, and hardly intoxicates more by its *Ale*, than by its *Burgeſs*. He is a firſt-rate Wit, and you may know him to be a good *Satyr* by the *Signature*.

This

This goes not in *Cypher*, becauſe of the opportunity I have of this *Expreſs*, who is an honeſt and truſty Gentleman. He is one of our *Coffee-houſe Meſſengers*, who viſit thoſe Houſes, better than any *Biſhop* his Dioceſs, and as punctually as the *Carriers* of the *Play-houſe* Bills, only with this difference, that theſe tell you what is to be *acted* or *counterfeited* to day, and our men relate what was *acted and counterfeited* yeſterday. In fine, they are *Politick Rat-catchers*, that walk every day from *Man*'s in the Court of Requeſts, to *Garoway*'s by the Exchange, and crumble their *State-Ratsbane* in every Coffee-houſe, as they go. But I muſt leave off, being juſt now order'd by the *Junto* to draw up ſome more *Relations* of proceedings in the lower Houſe, in ſuch *faſhion*, as may be moſt *creditable* and *advantagious* for the Cauſe, which are to be ſent into the Country after the reſt, which, we hear, operate *kindly*, and do admirable ſervice there.

Pray let me conſtantly hear how ſquares go in thy Province, and what ground the Devil gets in his *Neighbourhood* the *Low-Countries*.

Now according to form I ſhould ſay, *So I reſt*: But we proteſt againſt *Forms*, as I do moſt eſpecially againſt this, for, to ſay truth amongſt Friends, I can never *reſt*, till —— Therefore without any more ado, I am,

Dear Fellow-Labourer,

Lond. June 5.
78. S. V. *Whom* and *What* thou know'ſt.